



**Connecticut
Public Health
Association**

Promoting Public Health in Connecticut Since 1916

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Testimony in support of HB 5354

AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN TO CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2014

The Connecticut Public Health Association strongly supports **HOUSE BILL 5354 – AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN TO CHILDREN**. The legislation as it currently reads would authorize the Department of Public Health to identify and prioritize chemicals of high concern to children and on a biennial basis submit a report to the General Assembly on its findings. As written, it will not have a fiscal impact on DPH. CPHA maintains that enacting this legislation would be good public health policy since it would implement a process for protecting children from chemicals known to have a negative impact on their development and health.

When the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA) was created to allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to monitor and regulate chemical substances, over 60,000 chemicals were grandfathered in without requiring the producers of these chemicals to demonstrate their safety [1]. Over 20,000 new chemicals have been introduced since 1976 and despite EPA's power to regulate toxic substances under TSCA, testing has only been requested on approximately 200 chemicals [2,3]. Out of such a small portion of the chemicals reviewed, only five types of chemicals have been either banned or limited in use [2].

Chemical manufacturers maintain that chemical ingredients are proprietary information and therefore confidential, hindering the ability of the EPA and other researchers to assess their safety [3]. Furthermore, in 1989 the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans overturned an EPA ban of asbestos, a known carcinogen. The result: the EPA was left with limited ability to enforce bans of toxic chemicals, many of which, including asbestos, remain in widespread use in consumer products [4].

As the number of chemicals used in the United States has increased, so have the incidence rates for different types of cancers (brain, breast, lung, bladder, liver, prostate, kidney, and esophageal) as well as leukemias, lymphomas and skin melanomas [5]. The incidence rates of environmentally related childhood illnesses, such as asthma and childhood cancers, have also been steadily rising over the past 25 to 30 years [6]. While the TSCA has failed to adequately test and regulate potentially harmful chemicals, another agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), has identified over 400 chemicals as "known, probable or possible" carcinogens [3]. The President's Cancer Panel, in their 2008-2009 Annual Report, stated they were troubled to find that cancers due to environmental factors, including chemicals, have been severely underestimated [3].

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